1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

tribe, owned also the country on the opposite side of Apsley Strait at the southeast corner of Bathurst, while the Malauila, the band in the northern half of Bathurst Island, conversely overlapped their ownership across the strait to take in a thin strip of coastline on the northwest corner of Melville.

These details illustrate the fact that the band was the land-owning, workaday, territorially organized group which controlled the hunting, the food supply, and the warfare. Until the white man arrived in force in the coastal waters of North Australia, the average Tiwi regarded the nine bands as the main functional units of his existence, and his loyalty to and identification with his band were given much greater opportunity for exercise than any loyalty to or identification with the whole Tiwi tribe. He did many things as a member of a band, but he did little as a member of a tribe. Only when an outsider turned up did he need to think of himself as a Tiwi, and outsiders were very rare. For the rest of the time he thought of himself as a member of his band, thought of his band as his people, and of his band territory as his country.

The Household

Since the band consisted of anything from one hundred to three hundred people, it could not live together in one place, except for very short periods of time. Hunting and gathering in almost any part of the world (except the northwest coast of America in pre-white times) require the human population to disperse itself very thinly over the countryside and live from day to day in small hunting and camping units. Such small primary groups are usually in one sense families and in another sense households, and this is the case among the Tiwi. We propose to call such units households rather than families for reasons that will soon become apparent. It is true that Tiwi "houses," especially in the long dry season (from March to October), were the flimsiest and most temporary of structures, but the group of people in question was the group who lived together day after day, hunted as a unit, pooled the results of their food getting, and ate and slept together. Functionally this group is identical with an American household, even though the "house" they used was nothing more than a few piled-up tree branches, used as shelter for a night or two and then abandoned. Like the American household also, the Tiwi household usually consisted of a man, his wife (or wives), and their children, though in many would also be included a few leftovers or extras, common to all cultures, such as bachelor uncles, visiting cousins, ancient widowers, and ambiguous "men who came to dinner" and were still there. (Tiwi households did not, however, include maiden aunts, female orphans, or ancient widows, since these could not exist in Tiwi culture.)

Thus the Tiwi household was more or less the same thing as the Tiwi family group, but Tiwi family organization had such a number of unusual twists that we find it desirable to insist upon calling such a group the house-

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

304 In a few instances, a horizontal row of small circular scars was noticed beneath the cicatrices of the chest, extending from the axillar to the sternal-line, on one half of the body only. They appeared to have been burned into the skin by the heated end of a fire-stick[1] (*vide* Fig. 2, A).

Circumcision not practised.

304 101 171 681 Circumcision is not, as elsewhere in Australia, one of the attendant mutilations during the ceremonies of initiation, at the age of puberty. No cases were noted either on Bathurst or Melville Island. In this respect the Islanders resemble the fast disappearing Larrekiyas of the Port Darwin district and certain other tribes of Cape York and the adjoining islands.[2]

302 516 The pubic hairs are removed by "pulling them out" with the hand in the same way as the upper lip is cleared of its growth. While standing in conversation, the natives have acquired a peculiar habit of pushing the penis back between the thighs and keeping it from view by crossing one leg over the other.

Habitations.

342 The islanders build no permanent huts or structures to live under. Apart from the shelters afforded by local or natural conditions, such as overhanging trees, the only form of artificial shelter noticed was prepared from the bark of a tree. A long sheet is cut from the trunk and doubled crosswise at its centre. The two ends are then stuck into the ground at an angle of say forty-five degrees. Similar shelters are found on the north coast and elsewhere on the mainland. In the [101] absence of any more permanent structures, the islanders are, in this respect, not so 372 far advanced as the continental Australian aboriginal. Camp fires are, as usual, much in evidence and kept alight during the whole of the night. Fire-sticks are carried during the day time. Sticks and dry timber, collected to feed the fires, are broken to the required length, not across the knee but over the crown of the head. 513 Small sheets of paper bark (*Melaleuca sp.*) are used as mats to lie on when sleeping or camping.

Personal Wear.

291 302 Both male and female walk about in the nude state. The body is anointed with grease and besmeared, in one or more shades of colour, with ochre. The females carry folded sheets of paper bark or large food-carriers about with them, which, upon the approach of strangers, they hold in front of their person.

[171] It is of interest here to note that Captain Matthew Flinders,[3] as far back as 1803, made a similar observation on the mainland opposite. He saw a girl at Caledon Bay who "wore a small piece of bark, in guise of a fig leaf, which was the sole approximation to clothing seen."

[1] *Vide* also *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxxi, 1907, p. 10.
[2] *Cf.* J. MacGillivray, *Narrative Voyage H.M.S.* "*Rattlesnake*," p. 14.
[3] *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, London, 1814, vol. ii, p. 212.

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 OI20 Tiwi OI20

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Fig. 1. Snake Bay Settlement

114 Islanders on a hunt. The trip took us to a small clearing on the right bank of the Paluwiunga River, ten miles upstream from where it empties into the Arafura Sea.

131 A brief glance at the map will help to further pinpoint this location. Ten degrees south of the equator and at a distance of twenty to fifty miles due north from the Australian Northern Territory capital of Darwin, lies the relatively large Melville Island (1,000 square miles), named for Viscount Henry Dundas Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty, who authorized the coastal survey of 1818 during which the island was circumnavigated. To the west, separated by a narrow strait, lies the smaller Bathurst 101 Island. The group of people with whom I found myself camped by the river bank were members of the Tiwi, a tribe of Australian Aboriginals whose country includes both these islands. Today about [161
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797 seven hundred members of the tribe live near to the southeast corner of Bathurst Island where they are in various ways administered to by the Sacred Heart Mission. On the northern coast of Melville 161
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648 Island, on a hill overlooking Snake Bay, near the mouth of the

The couples marry young without any thought for the future. They just marry as, and when, they feel inclined, and the mission fathers provide the new home. Under the palms beside the Strait are many of the queer little iron humpies provided, just a roof, as it were, sloping on each side from the ridge-pole to the ground. The whole can be picked up and moved to a fresh position when fleas become too numerous and the surroundings otherwise unpleasant. These humpies scarcely seem attractive to white folk, but the islanders like them, and they are at least a great improvement on the dog-kennels of old iron that the blacks persist in erecting for themselves on the beach at Darwin.

Proper houses are provided in the Kahlin compound there, but the blacks despise them; and, although the miserable humpies on the beach are demolished from time to time by the authorities, they are all up again by next evening. The good fathers know what the islanders prefer, and they have given the married couples the kind of accommodation in which they feel most happy. The humpies may be hot and stuffy, but they are dry inside when it rains.

The island blacks, in many respects, differ considerably from the tribes of the mainland. They are excessively hirsute, and, on attaining maturity, the men grow long beards, many being of truly patriarchal proportions. The upper lip is kept bare, which practice seems to emphasize the magnificence of the beard. Shocks of hair, sometimes standing six inches high, add to a wildly impressive appearance. They are tall and muscular, and, as they stride along, they seem the very acme of physical development, a living advertisement for the natural, open-air existence. The hairs, by the way, are plucked from the upper lip one by one, and this painful proceeding is undertaken in the calmest manner, certainly with less fuss and facial distortion than the average white man makes during his morning shave.

The use of the woomera for throwing spears, and of the

[p. 15(A)]

13:Barclay J-3 (ca. 1939)1939 OI20 Tiwi OI20

411 grass, in the foreground, so that the whirling club slithers on in an unforeseen and most unpleasant manner. It may rise as high as a man's head, or it may strike him on the shins.

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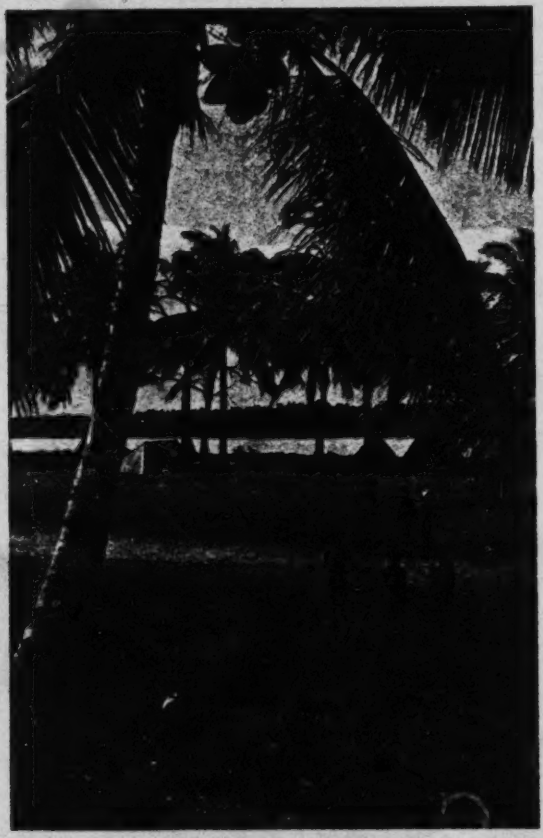

NATIVE "HOUSES" UNDER THE COCO-NUT PALMS AT BATHURST ISLAND MISSION.

726 Sometimes, as in the days of chivalry when English and French knights rode out before the main battle, eight men will advance to fight eight men of the other side, one pair at a time, each warrior throwing his spears and clubs in turn. Sentries are then posted to one side, before and behind the combatants. As a warrior with a stock of pidgin English put it, "That feller, him look out front side. That feller, him look out back side."

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At times warriors arrive by canoe to fight a duel on the beach close to the mission station. These are frequently more serious combats, and then men who are camped under the palms chase the duellists off; but these always land later farther down, and fight it out in the long run. Just before my visit, there had been fought the only naval battle in the history of the islands. The encounter took place in the mouth of Apsley Strait to the accompaniment of excited yells as canoes overturned when warriors stepped unevenly in dodging the flying spears. Nobody

[P. 17(B)]